

May 28, 1959

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
May 27, 1959

Others present: Secretary Herter
Secretary Dillon
General Goodpaster



Referring to the Geneva meetings, the President said it has seemed to him that Mr. Herter is succeeding in what we have always wanted to do -- to be firm without being nasty or offensive. Mr. Herter added that he thought we have had a fair measure of success in accomplishing what Foster Dulles had always hoped for -- that is to make clear to the world that our proposals are reasonable and constructive.

The President next mentioned the luncheon he was planning to have for the visiting Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers. He asked that the State Department assure each individual invited that there is no obligation whatsoever upon them to stay for the luncheon unless they want to. He said he simply planned to say at the luncheon that he has asked them as a measure of courtesy to their governments and appreciation for their attendance at the funeral services of Mr. Dulles. He would offer a single toast to the memory of Mr. Dulles.

Mr. Dillon said that the State Department had, as the President requested, considered the idea of a meeting of the four Foreign Ministers, and thought that such a meeting would be of very definite value. The President said that what he had in mind was simply to ask them in and tell them that it is, in his judgment, ridiculous that the world is divided into segments facing each other in unending hostility. He felt that decent men should be able to find some way to make progress toward a better state of things. Mr. Dillon thought it would be advantageous to have it known, at least generally, that the President had taken this position. The President stressed that he wanted to make confidential the nature of the specific discussions. Mr. Dillon added that Gromyko had asked if he could call on the President. Mr. Dillon thought that the meeting the President spoke

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of would take care of this request. The President said he would bring out that he had been anxious to see the group, but didn't see how he could see them other than all together.



The President then referred to the question regarding the place of a possible summit meeting. His views were by no means fixed on this. He thought our willingness to accept any of several solutions might give us a little trading material. He is somewhat inclined against Geneva because it has a reputation for failure and frustration (he mentioned that one of Napoleon's criteria in selecting an officer for high command was "is he lucky?"). Mr. Herter said that the problem relating to Vienna is that the Russians are planning to have the "youth congress" there and this would preclude its use for anything else during August. The President mentioned his idea of inviting a very large group of Soviet students to attend American colleges for a year, as a one-shot proposition. Mr. Herter mentioned that the exchange of students has been a very sensitive point with the Russians. The President said he realized this, but felt a large scale offer might "break loose something." He said he would like Mr. Herter and Mr. Dillon to think the matter over. At the proper time, talks with key leaders in the Congress on a very discreet basis would be necessary. He added that he had talked with J. Edgar Hoover about this and Mr. Hoover had thought the idea an excellent one and commented that it would not make his work more difficult.

With regard to the Geneva meeting, Mr. Herter said it had been mostly sparring thus far. The Soviets are insistent on two peace treaties for Germany. There is some fear that they are making a play for favor with the satellites by trying to set up the East German Republic. They are sensitive, however, on the issue of two peace treaties, since they try to call their proposal a "peace treaty with Germany" rather than separate treaties with two Germanies. Mr. Herter said that allied unity has been excellent so far, with agreement not to take moves in the conference without prior consultation. He said that Gromyko has maintained a very courteous manner, but is evidently operating under very tight instructions from Moscow. Mr. Herter said he hoped for something effective to come out of the plane trip back to Geneva. There will be no press present. Each person will have one assistant present to make notes. He hopes for candid discussions.

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SECRET

- 3 -

In general, Mr. Herter thought that the Soviets are trying to outwait the West in terms of offering modifications to their initial position. He thought that the time may come when he would want to state a deadline for positive results in the conference. The President agreed but said that we do not want to be too quick in setting such a deadline. Mr. Herter said he is trying to work away from the constant tendency of the press to report the conference in terms of who won and who lost on each particular topic. On the matter of disarmament, he thought that some progress could be made, for example in arranging a forum to consider the matter, and a time and a place for meetings. At present the eighty-two nations of the United Nations constitute a committee on disarmament. His hope is to see if the Soviets can be brought down to something reasonable. At this point he showed the President a letter from Adenauer which the President called "very good." The President went on to comment, however, that Adenauer's statement that only through agreement on disarmament can progress on other problems be made was too restrictive. He agreed as to its importance but he thought that many other measures must and could be taken in the interim.



The President agreed that the status of Berlin cannot be definitively settled except in the context of Germany as a whole. He therefore did not think that an interim agreement on Berlin could be accepted as the price to be paid for the summit meeting by the Soviets. He agreed that we should never be inflexible except on the two or three things that are basic to our whole position, the chief one being the rights and responsibilities in Berlin that we have.

Mr. Herter said that the allies are in complete agreement on the things they are opposed to, such as accepting a reduction of our rights in Berlin. They are not yet clear on the positive aspects however. He is inclined to feel that a temporary solution regarding Berlin may be possible, but he stressed the point of its temporary nature, since we cannot agree, in effect, to have three Germanies (the two now existing plus Berlin). He thought it is possible that we can deal with Berlin with the Soviets. They are pressing for recognition of East Germany. The West Germans are dead set against this, but are keen to make additional contacts with the East Germans. The President thought this was a hopeful sign. Mr. Herter said

SECRET
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the West Germans, however, want us to sit in with them in any committees wherein they meet with East Germans; they are terribly afraid of being left alone with this Communist group, dominated by the Kremlin. Mr. Herter said there is a little something to work on and hoped to get Gromyko on the plane to say more clearly what the Russians have in mind. The President suggested that perhaps as a parallel to the committee, steps could be taken such that the newspapers of both East and West Germany could circulate freely each in the others area.

Mr. Herter next raised the question of time, place and agenda for a summit meeting. The period of July and August he thought was difficult because we do not know what the Congress will do. The President commented that as at Geneva the Foreign Ministers would meet in the morning and the Heads of Government in the afternoon, largely to confirm what they had done. If the meeting continued for a while, he thought he could come back to the United States for a week, with the Vice President sitting in for him. The President added that perhaps it would not be too bad to have the meeting while the Congress is in session. This would tend to keep Congressmen out of Geneva, if that is where it is held. Also some things may come up wherein Congressional backing would be of value. He said he would accept August for the date of the meeting if the meeting seemed to show promise of being meaningful.



Mr. Dillon said that it is possible that de Gaulle and Khrushchev would leave the meeting when the President left, for prestige reasons. The President thought this problem could be eased through his saying that he would return. The President said he could go as early as the first of July. He wished to help Macmillan in the matter, and was therefore willing to rule out September. Finally, the President said that any time consistent with the foregoing that Mr. Herter thought was all right would be acceptable to him.

Mr. Herter raised another point regarding the summit meeting. He had told Gromyko, when he kept pressing for Polish and Czechoslovakian participation, that this raised the question whether the Soviets wanted them to come to the summit. Gromyko replied, saying he was not raising that issue. Such a question would be

DECLASSIFIED

7
SECRET

- 5 -

taken up separately. Mr. Herter felt that a summit meeting must be limited to the four Heads of Government. The President agreed.

Mr. Herter said the French are extremely sensitive on the question of having nuclear testing as an agenda item since they are not involved in those negotiations. They would not object to the matter being discussed in "side conversations" by the other three powers, however, so long as it is not on the agenda. The President said that if he could get agreement on the question of testing at the summit he would certainly do so. Mr. Herter added that the British are taking a very stout stand in insisting with us that the quota of inspections that they have proposed must be decided upon on the basis of technical factors.

Mr. Herter returned to the question of "breaking Berlin out of the Western package." He thought we must do so, working for a solution which would be temporary in nature. The President said he agreed and had always thought so. Regarding the link between German reunification and the European security zone, Mr. Herter said the French and the Germans had always opposed the latter without reunification. The British may push us very hard on this, however. He did not think that we should pay such a price for a Berlin settlement.

The President said his thought has always been to link the European security zone with a larger security arrangement.

Mr. Herter asked how long he should plan to stay in Geneva. The President said it is hard to say; Mr. Herter could stay longer if some little progress was being made. If he comes to a brick wall, however, he thought Mr. Herter should set a day for stopping the discussions since they were getting nowhere and the Ministers might as well go home. The President recalled that both Macmillan and Khrushchev had made statements that if no progress is made in the Foreign Ministers meeting, a summit meeting is all the more necessary. The President said he utterly disagreed with this concept. Mr. Herter said he was in full accord with the President and he suspected that Selwyn Lloyd is, too. Mr. Herter said he hoped he would have something more to report after his plane ride with Gromyko.

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Brigadier General, USA

